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ABSTRACT

A common call is for education in emerging as well as settled democracies to educate young and not so young learners to become responsible, participatory, and reflective citizens. These calls are based on the assumption that education can play a significant role in educating the youth for citizenship. In this manner education can contribute to the building of a united, peaceful, and democratic country. This paper begins by sketching in brief what education for democracy entails with reference to international and South African literature. The paper discusses several of the important policy documents and initiatives to instill this vision of education in a new democracy, namely in South Africa. Finally, it considers some of the challenges and potential advantages facing this country, with particular reference to the micro-interaction at the classroom level. (Contains 34 references.) (BT)

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EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY; SOME CHALLENGES FACING EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

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1. Introduction

A common call is for education in emerging as well as settled democracies to educate young and not so young learners to become responsible, participatory and reflective citizens. These calls are based on the assumption that education can play a significant role in educating the youth for citizenship. In this manner, education can contribute to the building of a united, peaceful and democratic country.

This paper begins by sketching in brief what education for democracy entails with reference to international and South African literature. It discusses several of the important policy documents and initiatives to instill this vision of education in a new democracy, ie. South Africa. Finally, it considers some of the challenges and potential advantages facing this country with particular reference to the micro-interaction at classroom level.

2. What is education for democracy and human rights?

Education for democracy implies more than just teaching students core concepts such as the importance of human rights or democracy. It entails three important features, the first of which is, encouraging students to become active participants in society by thinking for themselves and arriving at informed choices. These choices are informed by the possible consequences of their choices for themselves and for others in the society. Secondly, it implies that individuals should have the means, technical, linguistic or knowledge related, to participate in society. This means having access to the language of power, as well as to literacies such as print or computer literacy. The third feature is a sense of inclusion and empowerment, ie. that one is part of the society (or, in a more limited setting, an institution) and that one has a right to make one's voice heard.

A recent South African document, the Report of the Working Group on Values in Education, entitled, Values, Democracy and Education, notes the significance of

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inclusiveness, the celebration of diversity, technical know-how and knowledge, as well as independent thinking in education for democracy. About critical thinking, it states:

> The first [value] is to develop the intellectual abilities and critical faculties among all of the children and young adults in our schools. This is no small task for the philosophical emphasis of apartheid was conformity, obedience to rules and the suspension of intelligence. A democratic society flourishes when citizens are informed by a grasp of their history and of current affairs, where nothing is beyond question, where ideas are explored to their fullest extent possible and when there is an obligation on teachers to provide intelligent answers to questions. Our schooling system must therefore provide the basis of having informed and thinking citizens.

A similar point about education for democracy implying specific teaching methods in the classroom is sounded by Hogan and Fearely-Sander (?:59):

> Students need to be immersed in the practice of democratic citizenship - to investigate, analyse, audit, critique, deliberate, delegate, ... To paraphrase Dewey, an education for democracy must be an education *in* democracy, not an education in history.

Canen and Grant make similar points:

> Education for citizenship in democratic societies would therefore benefit from a view of citizenship which goes beyond a homogenised abstract approach, and addresses 'multicultural, hybrid citizenship', using the critical, intercultural approach already suggested. As argued by Taylor (1996), democracy involves the right to participate. This in turn requires an understanding of cultural contrast, so as to envision an inclusive society that is still not assimiliationist.

This implies specific rich, flexible and occasionally risk taking approaches to teaching. For Soudien (1995) in a society replete with difference, we must avoid fixed truths and arrested, fixated subjectivity. These limit possibilities for developing argument and can lead to violence. According to Banks (?) students must become critical consumers as well as producers of knowledge to perform in the "complex" and "diverse" world. Robinson (?) refers to a "civic literacy" as a means to create the kinds of individuals who can participate in a democracy. Civic literacy requires attention to literacy practices and knowledge practices within the classroom

> But civic literacy must extend beyond a language of critique to languages of construction and of possibility, to ways of thinking and speaking that are adequate to the complexities of collective living and problem solving, to modes of listening and of responding that are sensitive to the multiple voices and

minds of those who have stakes in civic issues and those who are affected by the solutions that are proposed for difficult problems. (Robinson, ?:14)

To learn to become citizens - active participants in civic projects intended to improve and enrich collective life and individual lived lives - students must be allowed and encouraged to make use of such experience, knowledge, and language as they have. It is then that democracy can begin in conversation; it is then that civic literacy, and a civility that might sustain it, can flourish. (Robinson, ?:16)

3. The attempt to create education for democracy in South Africa

The post-1994, post-apartheid government in South Africa has enshrined in policy many of the concepts of people's education, education for liberation or empowerment, that were espoused in South Africa in the pre-Apartheid liberation movements. The guiding policy document, however, has been the Constitution, which outlaws discrimination according to: race, gender, sec pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.

The Education White Paper of 1995 guarantees freedom of access, freedom of expression, and that every institution should have an action plan on human rights. The National Education Policy Act of 1996 calls for a system of lifelong learning, "enabling the education system to contribute to the full personal development of each student, and to the moral, social, cultural, political and economic development of the nation at large, including the advancement of democracy, human rights and the peaceful resolution of disputes" (p6). Thus these policy statements are calling for a very similar vision of education as those discussed in section 2, where students develop through a critical literacy which is also inclusive and constructive. There are many more policies, for example on inclusive education (consultative paper), or the South African Schools Act (1995). The latter grants more decision making power to parents as part of schools generating bodies.

The New Curriculum, Curriculum 2005, was intended to realise the ideals of non-racism and non-sexism, as well as the knowledge and literacy practices outlined by Robinson and others above. It is interesting that there are many academics, researchers and lobbyists who feel that more should be done to make the anti-race, human rights culture more overt or strongly present in the new curriculum. The Report of the Review Committee on C2005 recommends that "the values of a society striving towards social justice, equity and development through the development of creative, critical and problem-solving individuals lie at the heart of this curriculum" (v111); " a framework ... within a human rights approach which pays special attention to anti-discriminatory, anti-racist, anti-sexist and special needs issues". (viii)

In a recent initiative to draw attention to the values necessary for an education for democracy, the Minister Kader Asmal established a working committee on values in

education. The report contains sections on equity, tolerance, multilingualism, openness, accountability and social honour. Important elements defined in the report are "to develop the intellectual abilities and critical faculties among all of the children and young adults and schools. ... Our schooling system must therefore provide the basis of having informed and thinking citizens". Another element is inclusiveness, "This requires an enhanced degree of linguistic and cultural dexterity, tolerance and appreciation of difference on the part of teachers and administrators." The third element is for the educational philosophy to:

> provide learners with the tools to solve the many problems that come with being human throughout the life cycle. ... It is to treat problems as challenges to be solved through knowledge and understanding, rather than as unbearable burdens to be endured without solution. The will and courage to approach life in this manner does not simply reside in science, but in the spirituality of humanity that defines our attitude to life.

The values described in this document are still to be publicised widely, and a roll out plan to ensure their integration into the daily working of the education system is being devised. These comments on the new curriculum point to a tension: between, on the one hand, a belief that we should be making references to human rights, anti-racism and democracy overt, and on the other, a belief that we should be integrating it or embedding it within the very knowledge practices and discourses of the teaching and learning day to day activities. The report of the South African Human Rights Commission on Racism in Education also calls for overt attention to racism and human rights in the curriculum. All these reports point to the belief of many individuals that education can contribute to the democratisation of society via the education of the young, an expectation of formal schooling also expressed by for example Cross and Mkwanazi (1998. If education can play this significant role in advancing democracy and inclusiveness, the nature of this role must be examined very carefully. One aspect of this role, to do with discourse in the classroom, is examined in the rest of this paper.

4. Challenges and potential

Challenges facing a new democracy attempting to utilise education as a means to ensure participation in civic discourse are plentiful. The most obvious of these is that the education system itself at the level of infrastructure, human resources and ethos is uneven. In many instances it is still suffering from the inequalities, lack of social cohesion and of culture of teaching and learning, which are the vestiges of an apartheid era as well as of the instability common to societies in transition. This has been so severe that the Department of Education launched a Campaign to improve the Culture of Learning and Teaching Support (COLTS). The National Centre for Curriculum Research and Development (NCCRD) has in its reports noted the need for attention to human resource issues to support curriculum development and transformation. The Department of Education is aware of this need for a dual approach, i.e. attention to transformation and

education for democracy, as well as attention to basic functionality. This is reflected in the corporate plan for 2000, named *Tirisano*, meaning "working together".

This paper does not deal with the bulk of the above concerns, despite their enormous importance. Instead, it focuses on the challenges posed by the system as can be summed up by the term "discourse". This section defines the term discourse, with examples from fieldwork. In so doing, it indicates what challenges, potential or difficulties are posed by these elements for education for democracy.

5 Fieldwork

The paper draws on two studies. Study A is a PhD study (unpublished) by the author of this paper. It is a case study of 37 Linguistics 2 students at the University of the Western Cape in 1996. The study documents students' accounts of their acquisition of academic literacy from pre-school through to university and links this with an analysis of an assignment written by the students. The students are from a variety of educational, linguistic and racial backgrounds. The information recorded is of schools as they were 6 to 15 years ago. Study B, an NCCRD publication, deals with interviews in 30 schools in 4 provinces and 171 classroom observations in 1999. Study B also includes a series of interviews with researchers, NGO officials and other language related educators. Study B indicates that the conditions discussed in Study A are the same for many students today. Since both studies were qualitative, with the intention to explore issues rather than provide a conclusive, generalisable image of the state of language use and teaching in South Africa, substantiation of observations is provided by quotes or further elaboration rather than statistics.

6 Discourse

The term "discourse" is used as described by Gee (1990) to include habitual ways of thinking, speaking or acting specific to a particular group. The term includes register, dialect, knowledge practices, literacy practices, values and attitudes. Gee distinguishes between primary discourses, acquired first in the home and community, and secondary discourses, acquired in public settings or institutions such as the church, school or university. Secondary discourses involve formalised conventions and a relationship between the expert and novice. Of crucial importance in this paper is that discourses can be in conflict with each other, for example where an individual from one community moves into a setting where the dominant discourse embodies different ways of speaking as well as thinking, from his or her own. The discourses can be complementary, where the secondary discourse is a development of the primary one, ie the dominant discourse in the secondary setting is used by the same social grouping as in the primary setting. The typical example is the middle class child going to a middle class school, or a rural child in a church where the officiates come from the same socio-cultural grouping. The thesis posited in this paper is that the secondary discourses of the school operate more as a barrier to the majority of students in the country than as gateway. This does not imply that the barrier is totally impermeable, but that the ways to breach the barrier perhaps require

more attention. This includes building on the strengths and potential that do exist in the teaching and learning context.

This section looks at aspects of discourse such as language proficiency, knowledge practices, attitudes and identity.

6.1 Language proficiency

In order to realise the kind of education system enshrined in the policy documents above, students and teachers require a level of proficiency in the languages of instruction. In South Africa the language of instruction is increasingly English, despite the fact that there are 11 officially recognised languages in the country. In both studies this was found to be a serious problem inhibiting learning for many of the students. It was found that whilst language proficiency is one of several factors affecting learning, and co-occurs with these, it is a significant element.

One aspect of lack of proficiency uncovered in study B is the lack of proficiency in African languages on the part of non-African language speaking teachers in ex-white, coloured or Indian schools. Study B also noted that there are several NGOs in the Western Cape or Gauteng that are working in a small number of schools to enhance multilingualism of the teaching staff. This can be regarded as a potential which would need to be greatly enhanced, where pilot programmes are evaluated for replicability.

In both studies concern was expressed about the lack of proficiency of many African language speaking pupils and teachers in the language of learning and teaching. A teacher interviewed in Study B noted, "My proficiency in English sometimes distorts the subject matter". This has become even more serious in the recent period, where many ex-African schools are extending English as Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) from the fifth year of schooling to the first, for various reasons. The impact of learning in an additional language in contexts where both students and teachers have inadequate access to the language, and where both teachers and students have inadequate mastery of school or academic discourse itself, is negative. It results in learning and teaching styles favouring chanting and display. These are emphasised at the expense of exploration, experimentation or acquisition of academic conventions necessary for further learning, such as accuracy of detail or definition, forms of expository writing or dealing with references. This trend has been noted in international literature about South Africa and Peru by Hornberger and Chick (In press), New Zealand (Lankshear, 1997), Botswana (Arthur, 1996), Hong Kong (Lin, 1996), Burundi (Ndayipfakamiye, 1996), Zambia (Williams, 1996) or South Africa (MacDonald, 1993; Simons, 1986). Surely this is a significant challenge to education for democracy. Of course strong claims of parental preference for the additional language, in this case English, LOLT does not aid resolution. There has been much debate in the public domain about whether the solution is to extend instruction through the mother tongue, whether to increase proficiency in English, or whether a more flexible approach incorporating elements of both alternatives, would be the answer.

6.2 Literacy and oracy

Study A found greatly varying degrees of print literacy literacy practices in the homes of children from African and coloured backgrounds. These varied from homes where there was absolutely no print literacy at all, homes where the mother might have used literacy to write a letter or fill in a form, to homes where the child was taught to spell with fridge magnets before starting school. An argument advanced by literacy researchers such as Street (1995) is that educationists must draw upon the strengths of the community and build upon these, whatever they are. Examples from study A of rich oracy practices were alluded to and the challenge remains in the curriculum, how to incorporate these meaningfully and not in a tokenist manner. The following extract from an interview in Study A shows a student who was exposed to both traditional forms such as riddles and stories, as well as radio and print literacy:

> I grew up staying with my grandmother and my aunt. When my grandmother died, my aunt took over and she encouraged us a lot, me and my younger brother. She encouraged us a lot, because my grandmother, she used to say, "I want to see you sitting in your own office". She didn't read a lot because she was working night duty and she used to sleep during the day. But she encouraged us a lot about going to school, about looking after our books and she used to tell us that education is very important. It is the key to success. It is the key to everywhere and no one can take it from you. A sister to my grandmother, ja, she is the one that used to tell us stories, and we copied that from her and my sister copies that a lot and she is the one who used to take the books from the library and read the books. And she would come to us and say "Hey, I have a new story". And she make it as if it is her own story. ... And I noticed this one day that when she comes to us and say, "This is my new story", and I copied that and I used it to my younger brother. ... And my grandfather too, he was still alive then, he is the one who encouraged us and he used to tell us the stories [riddles] and we called it, like for instance, ... if it is a needle, I have a horse, it has no legs, but it gallops a lot and it has a long tail."

Study A found that prior learning and rich forms would not be noticed or rewarded in most school and university settings. Study B found teachers attempting to build bridges between prior and present learning, but not always effectively. Often a teacher would make a reference to an aspect of the syllabus relevant to the students' lives, but not make the links with the class lesson sufficiently explicit, or draw comparisons.

With reference to Street's injunction to build on uncovered literacy and oracy resources in a community, it was stated by more than one student in Study A that there was very little in the home to facilitate literacy or oracy. Poverty was such that the children experience very little oral interaction with adults, as one student explained:

> No my mummy didn't teach us anything because most of the time she was at work and when she comes back she is so tired. And she just wanted to sleep. And we stayed with our father but they separated, but our father was a drunkard I must say, so he was always working on our nerves al the time. So many weekends we used to live out on the weekends and leave him along because he used to shout at us, our mother.

In such instances positive reinforcement was sometimes provided by siblings, or the church, as the same student went on to say:

> What I learned from church, mostly according to my understanding was that even if you are alone you must try to get things of your own, and not give up. If you want a thing you must just struggle to get what you want. And sometimes we used just to read bibles and it was the Xhosa bible. We were using Xhosa bibles.... I want to be educated. I want to live a better life than we used to live with my mum.

What the church gave this student was a strength to persist against enormous odds. At the time of the interview she was studying second and third year Arts courses at the University of the Western Cape.

6.3 Teaching styles

Study A reflects on teaching styles in the foundation phase of 10-20 years ago. An excerpt from the written retrospective observations of a university students shows many positive as well as negative elements his praise-and-punish experience:

> When I was at the age of 7 me and my colleagues our teacher expected us to know the poem and recite it the following day. That was the punishment she gave to us for making noise while she was not in the class. Following day, I emerged as the only one who recited the poem untill the end. And she gave me her polony which was in her lunch box, since that day I became a loyal student to my teacher. The poem was "Two Black birds". This incident occurred even when I was in std 4, when I recited the whole Afrikaans poem "Die stoute kukuntjie" but this time it was not a form of punishment although all the students were punished. In this regard we learn English language through reciting poems without attaching any meaning.
>
> This story portrays a typical way that we used to acquire new knowledge of English and Afrikaans ie one has to memorise things and reproduce them without understanding them.

> And we had no freedom to express ourselves the way we want to. For example, we have to do according to the rules, but you can't say what is inside you.

Study A notes a strong tendency towards authoritarian teaching with an emphasis on punishment, correction of errors and in many instances an over-reliance on rote learning and chanting. Study B notes evidence of group methods and a positive influence in the foundation phase, which could be attributed to C2005. At the time of writing this paper C2005 has not been instituted across all grades. Study B notes an over-reliance on form and structure in language teaching, and that language teaching is often not used to foster cognitive growth. Both studies have noted a great variety in teaching quality, from schools in which cognitive growth is being seen to be advanced, to those where it is not. Study B notes that positive examples of good practice are demonstrated at schools in all socio-cultural contexts, not merely the elite or privileged. Study A concludes that there has been a continuum where with exceptions, there is a trend of privileging in favour of urban and elite, as well as previously white or coloured schools.

Studies A as well as B note that despite exceptions, in mixed language classrooms teachers do not have the expertise to teach students with differing levels of proficiency in the Language of Learning and Teaching. Reactions of teachers to the challenges of the mixed language classroom range from anger, irritation and expectation that the newcomers must adapt, a sense of helplessness, to occasionally, practical action. As one teacher in a mixed language, ex-Indian primary school, put it:

> We had problems in our classrooms. We had to do something. We used everything. I used to call the guard to my classroom. I mean, you are obviously desperate now, you not gonna let the child just go by like that. We used to call the caretaker, we used the guard, and we used anything. So we had to do something ourselves.

In this instance the teachers went on a "crash course" of IsiZulu, which they found extremely helpful. In other instances the teachers employed first language speakers as assistants in the classroom, in one case paying the assistant out of the teacher's own salary.

The impact of lack of expertise in the mixed language classroom on learning, will be on the learners' self identity as well as learner attainment. An African language speaking student featured in Study A went to an English speaking, ex-Indian school. At points she enjoyed English tremendously, but the impact of a destructive teacher is demonstrated in her comments:

> At first I was forced to learn English so that I can be able to communicate with others at school. But when times goes on I started to be interested myself. I started to like English a lot in such a way that when I was at home with my friends I communicated with it. Although I started to like English, it was

difficult for me to speak it well because of my teacher's attitude towards those who do not know and understand English well. My English teacher was an Indian. She was very cruel. For example if she told you to read a paragraph and you pronounce a word the way she don't like or wrongly, she will say to you, "my child why are you bothering yourself by coming here every day? You are stupid because I taught you how you must pronounce this word, sit down, you are still far from knowing English". Sometimes if she ask a question in English and you fail to answer because you didn't understand the question, she will say, are your parents both educated? And if you say "No", she will say, "Yes I can see that, you are lacking parents' motivation". My English teacher reduces my interest in English because at that time I was very young and to be discouraged like that was not good at all. But conditions changed completely when I was doing standard 3. My English teacher was very good.

6.4 Knowledge practices

Study A revealed various aspects of difference between knowledge practices of the home as well as of the school, which might have an impact on education for democracy. In study A students spoke about ways of discussing events in the home, for example being told a story with an embedded moral, but not necessarily discussing the moral, which would be different from knowledge practices at school or university. Other examples of difference might be an approach to knowledge and argument at odds with individual position-taking. This difference has been cited in Study B with regard to C2005, where an interviewee, a researcher who is also a speaker of an African language, maintained that the practices in the new curriculum, calling for students to argue and think for themselves, was at odds with the way she and others grew up, not to question to ideas or values of adults. She was not making a value judgement about C2005, but simply saying that these differences was a challenge the curriculum has to deal with.

These differences in relation to knowledge practices are embedded in language use, thus educators often assume students lack language proficiency when the difference has to do more with community related epistemologies. Writers have argued that the best way to deal with these differences in discourse practices is to make students aware of the relative strengths and purposes of different discourses, and to legitimise the use of each type (Gough, 2000). This would enable us to realise the strengths of the different discourses, as well as ensure a larger discourse repertoire for students.

6.5 Attitudes towards education

Gee's definition of discourse includes attitude. An important element of this is attitude towards schooling. Study A reflects on community and individual attitudes towards learning. The following quote represents both a positive attitude towards schooling of a family and student, as well as the alienation of a broader grouping within the community. The student, who grew up in a rural area, was consistently encouraged to do well at

school by his mother. She wanted him to work in an office in the company where his father worked. His story concludes:

> After getting standard ten, she [my mother] changed her mind and said, "I want you to go to the university. I am prepared to sell everything belonging to me in my wardrobe, so that you can go.
>
> At least at home it was viewed as an important thing. But in terms of the community, it was not. In fact, it was viewed as an important thing, but due to the fact that my friends and other children in the area where I was growing up in, they happened not to love school, they always see school as a place of alienation, as a foreign place as a place where they cannot spend even a day, so they used to run up and down, run away from school. So their attitude, and that changed the attitude of the community, and became against of those who were still going to school.

Study A recorded many instances of community alienation. Some of this is bound up with the colonial history of the imposition of English and Christianity on our people, some with more recent events relating to oppression, neglect and instability. Mention was made in Study A about female students being discouraged from studying due to traditional beliefs about the role of women in society. This discouragement appears to have been stronger in the time of the students' parents, especially in the rural areas, than it is now.

6.6 Identity

Inclusion represents an ideal in South Africa, a society still riddled with perceptions of difference, otherness and sometimes anger. Study A recorded many examples of how use of English by African language speaking students is bound up with social stratification. An example is of a student recounting how her mother did not have the opportunity to learn English because of the pass laws during Apartheid, where she was hounded out of the urban areas. Many students recounted how their first experiences of learning English were from the hands of their mother's employer's children. They would accompany their mother, a domestic worker, to her employer's house. Some of these experiences are of the past, admittedly, but have vestiges in the collective memory. Even at university in 1996, african language speaking students in Study A indicated ill ease with fitting into the university milieu, and an acknowledgement that *they* would have to adapt to the dominant social and academic discourse rather than the other students and lecturers. This is related to a serious problem facing racial and other forms of integration in the present era: a lack of acknowledgement by managers and teachers that the dominant discourses are culturally bound and exclusive, despite seeming to be universal and neutral discourses (Keating, 1995; Mayher and Tetrault, 1997). This is not surprising, since it appears as if the marginalized are aware of and describe themselves in terms of their identity, but not necessarily the powerful. Cross and Mkwanazi-Twala (1998:13) quote Brake (1980):

> For black people their primary identity, the way in which they are reacted to, and the way in which they act upon the world is mediated by their colour, and the oppression that brings, structurally, politically, psychologically and economically.

This was evident in Study A, where African language speaking students referred to their identity as "African" or black, but not the English or Afrikaans speaking students. In one group interview where students referred to their difficulties as "African" students, one student interjected, apologizing for these constant references, saying "It is not that we are racist, it is a matter of saying what you are actually experiencing". This section points to challenge as well as strength: if we do not resolve the challenges posed by our education system we will have more black students who will want to learn English to be "white" (Martin, 1996) and more students who will retreat into laagers of otherness, indifference, hatred or bitterness. It is the assumption in this paper that there is surprisingly little of this retreat, and a noteworthy expression of goodwill and pragmatism in the public domain. In many educational forums organised by the Department of Education or other groupings, I have often been surprised how many middle of the road South Africans wish to be part of the collective, even when they sometimes lack the understanding of what this collective is, or how to be appropriately a part of it. If we build on the magnanimity and accommodation of many of the students interviewed, we can indeed build an edifice striving for education for democracy.

7 Discourse and change

Study A makes important observations in relation to change, about the mutual influences of the community on educational institutions, and the role of the individual in relation to both the community and educational institutions. The study notes the washback effect of the educational institution on the community, but also the impact that the discourses of the community have on the school, especially if the teachers and principals are from the same community as the students. This is a strength in that it can reduce alienation. Examples from Study A show a rural school principal who understood when tests would have to be postponed because the children had to take the cattle to be dipped, or where the use of traditional stories and riddles at school made a young child feel at home. However when change is instituted these seepages are often overlooked, and assumptions are made about the school or site of learning as homogenous across a nation, ignoring that in many of these the dominant discourse is very different from that at urban elite schools.

Study A also notes that although trends can be delineated for different social groupings, individual agency plays a strong role in facilitating or hindering learning. It remains a challenge, how national or even provincial policies and strategies can take this role into account.

5. Conclusion

The broad principles of the South African post-Apartheid policy environment have been outlined and have been shown to call for an education system which educates its citizens for democracy, participation and inclusiveness. The limitations of this young democracy from a fiscal and human resources point of view have been shown to be wide ranging and extensive. The paper indicates that one serious focus in the attempt to realise education for democracy is at the level of discourse in micro interaction, ie. teaching and learning. Interaction at this level is multifaceted, pertaining to language use, ie. form, as well as the values and attitudes that inform the language use. Limitations at this level are shown to be an outcome of our past education system and social forces of domination relating to the apartheid era, and further into the past, with our colonial history. The influence of other cultural institutions such as the church or various traditions are alluded to.

These influences demonstrate that there are both problems, challenges, as well as potential within the education system. These are informed by human interaction as this has settled into discourse patterns. The notion of discourse incorporates elements of social determinism, or an acceptance that social structures play a significant role. However, by definition (cf. Gee, 1990) it also incorporates concepts of change, creativity and human agency. The notion of discourse thus understood, allows educationists to proceed with the limitations in our society, as well as the richness and potential, in order to realise an education system which works for the upliftment of all.

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